



Catalyzing Cultural Transformation at McGraw-Hill Education



Executive Summary

When David Levin was appointed CEO of McGraw-Hill Education (MHE) in 2014, he took charge of a business facing severe industry disruption and needing to transform from a traditional textbook publisher into a learning science enterprise. To drive that change, Levin recognized that MHE's leadership and corporate culture would need to transform as well. The Catalyst L&D initiative was designed to facilitate that culture transformation by providing leaders with the interpersonal skills, entrepreneurial mindset and enterprise perspective to transition to a new environment that fosters collaboration, action and influence.

MHE worked closely with Leaders' Quest and Babson Executive Education to craft Catalyst, an experiential learning initiative featuring both individual and group components and with objectives and outcomes tightly aligned to enterprise core competencies and business strategy. Through collaborative efforts on needs analysis, program design, and delivery execution, the providers and client forged a balanced and sustainable partnership that endured and strengthened through five cohorts over two years.

Program structure and delivery modes featured significant diversity in pedagogic methods and environments. To start, all participants completed a 360 degree assessment and met with a coach to interpret results and set objectives. The cohorts then spent three days in a Leaders' Quest, an experiential learning journey that immersed participants in a series of diverse environments that disrupted physical, mental and emotional comfort zones. This journey enabled leaders to "reset" relationships typically defined by professional personas and competing responsibilities, paving the way to enterprise thinking and collaboration.

At Babson, MHE leaders wrestled with issues related to an industry characterized by change, uncertainty and ambiguity. After exploring the implications of the changing world of learning, participants were introduced to the entrepreneurial mindset through Babson's methodology of Entrepreneurial Thought & Action, and wrapped up by learning about value creation where innovation meets financial discipline. A final 360 and coaching session allowed participants to gauge progress and tune personal objectives, and ongoing mentoring reinforced learnings and enhanced insights.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators demonstrated that Catalyst impacted MHE on multiple levels: enhancing leaders' mindsets and skillsets, driving gains in collaboration and enterprise activity, and enabling improvements in business operations. The importance of Catalyst, however, was greater than those measurable components. The design of the program modeled the dynamic, customizable educational programming that MHE is pioneering in the world. By allowing each person to learn in his or her own way, mixing individual insight with group experience, Catalyst gave MHE leaders their own immersion into the blended learning future they were charged with creating and further informed how they should lead and steward the organization's transformation.